

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 17 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Please amend Claims 16 and 18 as follows.

1-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) An ophthalmic apparatus comprising:

illumination means for illuminating an eye fundus area including a specified target area;

image taking means for taking the image of the eye fundus area and thereby outputting an image signal;

signal processing means for processing and normalizing the image signal, based on a condition determined in accordance with the outputted image signal from said image taking means;

position determination means for determining the position of the target area based on an output of said signal processing means; and

auto tracking means for executing automatic tracking of the position of the target area based on an output of said position determining ~~means~~ means.

wherein the signal of the target area indicates a vessel image, and said signal processing means is adapted to extract a signal of a portion of the vessel image and to execute a normalization process for varying the gain based on the signal of the portion of the vessel image.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) An ophthalmic apparatus according to ~~claim 17~~ claim 16, wherein said signal processing means includes normalizing range setting means for setting an effective range of the normalization process for varying the gain, based on the signal of the portion of the vessel image.

19. (Previously Presented) An ophthalmic apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said signal processing means includes normalizing range varying means for varying a size of a region of normalizing to vary the gain, based on the signal of the portion of the vessel image.

20. (Previously Presented) An ophthalmic apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said normalizing range varying means is adapted to vary a size of a region of normalizing in accordance with a diameter of the vessel image.

21. (Previously Presented) An ophthalmic apparatus according to claim 16, wherein, in the normalization process, the gain is varied from a predetermined period after a start of automatic tracking, and is thereafter fixed.

22. (Cancelled)